THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 71.)

LETTER XXXV.

My dear E——,

I HOPE I do not deceive myself, in supposing that you have been amused with the account in the last letter: had I suppressed the name of the insect and omitted a few circumstances, as in one of Hume's essays, or pretended that some traveller, Mr. Humbold, for instance, had discovered a nation of Amazons in South America, you would have admired the arrangement of a commonwealth, in which the monarchical and democratick powers were so wisely combined, and the science of domestick administration carried to such perfection. In some future letter, I will endeavour to give you an idea of the discoveries which have been made by another Mr. Huber, the son of the last-mentioned, in the history and internal management of a race of bees, who live under ground; we call them humblebees, in English; they make in small quantities, an inferiour kind of honey, and have an instinct, or inspiration, call it which you will, adapted to their peculiar circumstances and situation: he has turned his attention to the commonwealth of ants also, whom I find, upon better acquaintance, to be by no means unworthy of the notice taken of them by Solomon; they cannot indeed be held forth as patterns of foresight and frugality, for they consume as much as they can lay their hands on, and sleep all the winter; but they have in general a large family to bring up; they have fatigue parties who labour for the common good, and bring home food for the rest, in a

very unusual way, and they are content that their superiours, who are the parents of the nation, should be exempted from labour: these last, who are a winged race, take flight, with the exception of a very few, at a certain season of the year, and leave the ant-hill, as the nobility of France did the *tiers état*, to get through the winter as they can; there are circumstances attending this active race that are not unworthy of our attention: they have a degree of sensibility in their horns, or feelers, by which their sensations are communicated to each other in a way scarcely inferiour to speech, and though armed with teeth, they seldom make use of them against any living creature, but instead of that violence which many of the smaller of the brute creation exercise against such as are still smaller and weaker than themselves, they employ arts, of which you would not suppose an ant capable: the principal objects of their attention are the puceron and the gall insect—animals which, like a rich luxurious planter, live always upon the same spot, and derive a superabundant nourishment from the paternal stem, or leaf, with hardly any other exertion than what the powers of the trunk require: these they approach, and practising certain blandishments, induce them to give up a part of their superfluity: sometimes they carry their arts still further; they either surround the little establishment of pucerons with a shelter of clay, against the weather, and against the inroads of other animals, taking care to leave a private passage for themselves, or, as if they foresaw a degree of danger from coming abroad every day, they carefully remove the pucerons to their own cells under ground, furnish them with roots to live upon, and compress them at regular periods, as the inhabitants of a village in the Alps may be seen milking their cows every morning and evening. Other animals are observed to live among the ants, unmolesting and unmolested, and may possibly serve for some domestick purpose, which has not yet been discovered, and as the pucerons are in the nature of cows, these other insects may be as the dogs and cats of the ant nation. If these discoveries of the younger Mr. Huber raise the nation of ants in your estimation, it must be confessed, that they very much elevate the importance of the puceron race, who act also as purveyors for the race of bees; it is to them is owing that honied substance on the leaves of trees, and which sometimes falls from them like dew,* and which you may perceive the bees so busily employed in collecting of a summer morning. You will be struck with the circumstance of three individuals of the name of Huber, of three succeeding generations, being distinguished for their ingenuity and their talents of observation in Natural History, but the race of man, unlike the race of bees and ants, who are impelled by instinct, is principally influenced by the force of early domestick example; our nerves, like the strings of a musical instrument, may be made to convey the most sublime, or the most ordinary sensations, and our mental organs can only be developed

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* I observe that Forsyth, who has the merit of having adapted the improvements of surgery, to the treatment of fruit trees, was acquainted with the nature of this substance, which he calls honey-dew; he attributes it to a small insect, called the vine-fretter.

by the culture which our minds receive. You may not be able to leave your children rich, or to see them placed in brilliant situations, but you may give them morality to direct their course by, you can inspire them with activity, which seeks for employment, and you must take care that a liberal education shall enable them to turn their activity into a proper channel.

On looking back, I perceive, that contrary to a practice very common in the world, I have spoken too little of ourselves, and too much of others; it is time, therefore, to enter into some description of our country life, and of the place we live at.

As the houses of Geneva are crowded with inhabitants, the streets are dirty, without any side pavement, and, in general, too steep for pleasurable exercise: the taste for passing the summer in the country, is very prevalent, and we, among the rest, began, at a very early period of the Spring, to look out for a retreat: the difficulty was, to determine upon a choice in the number that were offered, and we at last fixed upon the *Maison Constant* at St. Jean, near the confluence of the Arve and Rhone, which we got furnished for sixty pounds a-year. The house is roomy and convenient; and three or four steps lead from the drawing room to the terrace, which is upwards of 100 yards long, and broad in proportion, and planted with double rows of lofty trees, which afford shade at every hour of the day, and are so arranged, as to leave intervals at either extremity and in front for one of the most beautiful and diversified prospects in the world. The slope in front, which might almost be called a precipice, leaves room for a narrow strip of vineyard, and then succeeds the broad, azure-coloured, rapid stream of the Rhone: a garden tract of 60 or 70 acres of rich soil, bounded by the Arve, and visibly the deposit of the waters in former times, next presents itself, in all the lively beauty of variegated vegetation; and the view is afterwards carried over fertile fields and vineyards, and farm houses, and villages, till it is terminated, at no great distance, by the mountain of Soleve. To the left, the city presents itself in one of the best points of view, at a distance of little more than half a mile; on one side of it is a glimpse of the lake, and above it, at a distance, are cultivated hills, where I often admire the unusual reunion of all that bespeaks plenty and population, with that sort of comfortable retirement from which it might be delightful to survey the world. On the other side is seen the Buet, one of the loftiest of the Alps, and next to it is the commencement of those masses of granite which are connected with Mont Blanc. From the right of the terrace, the view would remind you of those sudden turns in the North River, where the waters appear to have burst a passage: the banks are lofty and steep, and the Rhone receives the accession of the Arve, which, white with pulverised rock, from the mountain, seems at first repulsed, as a rough and ill-bred country 'squire might be by some beauty of polished manners, and better education—but great is the power of perseverance; those turbid waters, which at first make scarcely any impression on the Rhone, are very soon in possession of half the space, from bank to bank, and shortly after, from the change of colour, which is evident, they seem in possession of the whole. A

clergyman of Geneva, preaching not long ago to a numerous audience, and wishing to impress upon the minds of the younger part of his congregation a sense of the danger that would arise from the contagion of improper company in the world, made a very happy allusion to the junction of these rivers, and to the effects which I have described. The church of Geneva, though stripped of its consistorial powers, is still rendered respectable by the personal merit of its ministers, and good preaching is as much admired as ever. The sermon is, indeed, the only part of the service, which is properly attended, and it is not unusual, after the reader has been reciting the word of the Lord to empty benches, to perceive a rush of company, and a degree of momentary confusion, when a favourite minister is to preach, which reminds one too much of the theatre. The style of preaching is such as you would think exaggerated; it is attended with a great deal of action, and consists very much in description.

The estate annexed to the *Maison Constant* is a very small one, and in the hands of a farmer who pays thirty louis for about twelve English acres, with a small dwelling house, and out-houses. From two poses, or 58,254 square feet (English) of vineyard, he has, this year, made seven chars, or 5600 quarts, nearly 13 pipes of English measure. The wine is but of an ordinary quality, and from the abundant vintage all over the country, would not sell, at present, for more than £3 the char. Such land is supposed to be worth about £80, the acre. Below the house is another small estate, with a vineyard and a garden, at the foot of which runs the Rhone.

Before the reformation, there was a nunnery on the spot, the church was dedicated to St. Jean, which has given its name to the whole neighbourhood. The garden tract, on the opposite side, reminds me a little of our rice fields, it is cultivated to the utmost advantage, and watered by means of wheels, which having buckets fixed to the rim of the circumference, and being set in motion by the current, are seen dipping up and pouring out, alternatively, the water in the manner of the elevators in our rice mills: the water is received in a trough properly placed for that purpose, and is conducted where it is required. A drawing which accompanies this will give you a very good idea of the situation I have been describing; words alone are insufficient.

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For The Port Folio.

EDUCATION.

From the infancy of that well organized establishment, The Philadelphia Academy, until the present period of its glorious maturity, we have been constantly solicitous for its success. Powerful were the reasons for this sort of anxiety. Frequent habits of intimacy with the gentleman, to whom the arduous care of this Seminary is intrusted, taught us highly to appreciate his moral and intellectual worth, the purity of his principles, his variety of information, and his zeal in the cause of useful and elegant literature. Nor did the plan and discipline of his Academy escape our regard. We thought the one was liberal and the other exact, and both commanded an ample approbation. The success of this Seminary has abundantly verified every sanguine hope. In despite of early obstacles, and frequent disappointments, Dr. Abercrombie has meritoriously persevered, and has tri-

umphed over the Malice and Caprice of Fortune. We had not the pleasure of witnessing his recent exhibition, by which, according to annual custom, the Publick are entertained with brilliant proofs of the abilities of the instructor, and the genius and docility of his pupils. But though it was our misfortune to be absent, we learn from all quarters, and, in particular from the report of those, whose praise is of sterling value, that the performance of the young gentlemen exceeded all expectation. The skill and harmony of their enunciation, the gracefulness of their gesture, the accuracy of their emphasis, and the dignity and manliness of their deportment were the themes of general applause. At the close of the Commencement their classical instructor pronounced the following Charge, which is copious without prolixity, and *minute without confusion.* Although the topicks of education are of extreme triteness, and have been amply and ably discussed by original thinkers, under the happiest auspices, yet Genius, in alliance with victorious Industry, can discover new and pleasant paths to Minerva's Temple. Dr. Abercrombie though he has had frequent occasion to traverse a beaten field, has the art of conducting us through it without a symptom of languor, or an exclamation of impatience. We follow him and are delighted; nor should we assign so ample a space to the article, now expanding before us, were it not a dictate of our judgment that his survey of the varieties of life is wide and clear, and that it may be profitably scanned, not merely by the prying schoolboy, but by the adult critick. In the present state of the country, while some are engrossed by Avarice, and many are servile to Faction, while the grovelling crowd see nothing but Earth's surface, and only the favoured few perceive and acknowledge the transcendant charms of Genius, assisted by Art and Learning, fortified by Discipline, let the merit of a successful Teacher receive no inglorious reward. Liberal encouragement will invigorate future exertion, and that ACADEMY we commend, like those of which we read in the golden ages of Greece, may be the nursery of Heroes, Philosophers, Orators, and Statesmen.

A CHARGE, &c.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN,

This day, by minds less expanded and cultivated than yours, would be considered as a day of jubilee; because the long-expected day of emancipation from the confinement and discipline of a school.

That you should finish your course of studies here with joy, and justly appreciate the honours which this Seminary confers upon her studious and faithful sons, is indeed natural and truly laudable. But, I flatter myself, your exhileration originates not in so childish, so ignoble a motive as that I have suggested: a motive which can exist only in a weak and a frivolous mind. You, I trust, rejoice because you have now completed the acquisition of those elementary principles of English literature, which form the proper basis for a learned, and, where that is not intended, will always be in the highest degree useful, as constituting the various branches of a complete English education.*

In the former case, the correct and scientifick knowledge you have

* The branches of science, taught in the Philadelphia Academy, are Reading, Writing, Arithmetick, Merchants' Accompts, Book-keeping, Grammar, Composition, Elocution, Natural History, Geography and Logick; together with the general principles of Morals and of Christianity; the students, under the age of sixteen, being called upon every Saturday to recite the Catechism of the religious society to which they belong; after which a lecture is read by the Director, upon one of the general precepts or principles of the Christian Religion.

here acquired of the construction and idiomatick peculiarities of your native language, and of those principles which teach you to express your sentiments through its medium with elegance and perspicuity, as well as accurately to judge of the compositions of other writers, will not only facilitate your acquisition of other languages, but induce such a taste for philological learning, and excite such an ardour and acuteness of investigation, as will render the progress of your future scientifick pursuits both easy and agreeable.

To those of you who are immediately to direct your attention to the more active scenes of human industry, whether those of Commerce or of the Mechanick Arts, the general elements of useful knowledge you can now command, will ever prove an inexhaustible source of self-satisfaction, of refined entertainment, and of general respectability.

A perfectly critical knowledge indeed of our language, and consequently of the most refined beauties of English literature, cannot be obtained without some acquaintance with the different languages from which many of its words are derived. To all of you, therefore, I most earnestly recommend the immediate study of the Latin and Greek languages; for, independently of the close connexion which they have with your own, some of the most inestimable and sublime effusions of pure morality, the most fervid and exuberant productions of poetick genius, and the most interesting and important incidents of ancient, civil, and biographical history, are to be found in the Greek and Roman authours; which, to be fully understood and enjoyed, must be perused in the language in which they were originally written; all translations falling infinitely short of the spirit and expression of an original work of genius in a foreign tongue.

You are all young enough to afford a considerable portion of time to the study of classical literature, even though you should not afterwards incline to either of the learned professions. Your late habits of application, and your acquaintance with the general principles of English grammar, will wonderfully accelerate your acquisition of those of other languages; and be assured that the time and exertions employed in acquiring them will never be regretted by you. Indeed no man can with propriety be said to have received a liberal education, without having devoted some time to the study of Grecian and Roman literature. No mental superstructure can be perfectly solid or truly ornamental, which is not raised upon the adamantine foundation of classical learning, upon a general if not a critical knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages. The Dorick pillar may support a cottage, but the Corinthian alone is accommodated to a palace or a temple.

The study of the Classicks communicates a refinement and liberality of sentiment, an energy of diction, and even an urbanity of manners, which are essential properties in the character of a scholar and a gentleman. Who can be said to have a polished taste for history or to be fully informed on that subject, who is unacquainted with the narrations of Thucydides, Plutarch, Xenophon, Herodotus, Sallust, and Livy? How can he be said to have a knowledge of the poets, who has never read the immortal productions of Homer, Anacreon, Pindar, Horace, Juvenal, and Virgil? and how superfi-

cial a moralist must he be, who is a stranger to the precepts which flowed from the pen of a Seneca, a Plato, an Epictetus, a Socrates, and a Pliny? What true politician is ignorant of the writings of Tacitus, Polybius, Justinian, and Aristotle? and what oratour, of Quintilian, Demosthenes, and Cicero?

"The human mind," says the justly celebrated Vicesimus Knox, "when cultivated by classical instruction, shoots up to maturity with the vigour of an indigenous plant; but thrives slowly, like the exotick, when nurtured only by the slender supplies of a partial and superficial education."*

Every man who is endowed with a taste for reading, or wishes to associate with sensible, well-informed men, must feel with bitter regret the deficiency of his own education, and consequently his inferiority of character when in polished and improved society, if he be ignorant of those languages in which some of the most solid, as well as brilliant efforts of the human mind have been communicated. When of course the quotations from and allusions to such authours as often afford the most powerful aid in serious discussion, and give the highest zest to lively and animated conversation, will be altogether unintelligible to him; as will also be the frequent references and quotations found in books.

To avoid this embarrassment, to obviate this difficulty, and to expand, invigorate, and enrich the mind with an inexhaustible store of useful and ornamental literature, make yourselves acquainted with the writings of the most celebrated Greek and Roman authours in the original: at least acquire such a command of those languages, as will enable you to understand select passages, which may be referred to or quoted. You will find that a diligent application to this pursuit will soon liberally reward your exertions, and awaken such a degree of attention to general literature, and particularly to classical and belles lettres subjects, as will not only provide a perpetual feast of scientifick sentiment for yourselves, but render you ornaments of refined society, and the familiar associates of those, who, as luminaries in the intellectual world, dissipate the gloom of ignorance and errour, and, by their genial influence, improve the heads, and exhilarate the hearts of those who bask in their invigorating beams.

An acquaintance with classical literature is always a valuable, and sometimes an essential preparation for an entrance upon professional studies.

You are now about to step upon the great theatre of the world, and by the choice of a profession to determine, as far as depends upon yourselves, your future usefulness and celebrity in society: it behooves you, therefore, before you select the path which you will pursue through the mazy labyrinth of human life, to pause and seriously to consider the dispositions and qualifications necessary for a successful progress; and more especially the advantages and disadvantages attendant upon each profession.

To aid you in the inquiry, I will devote the remainder of this address to that important investigation.

The general sources of professional employment in the different classes of civil society are Agri-

* Essays, No. 3.

culture, the Mechanick Arts, the Army, the Navy, Commerce, and what are called the learned professions of Law, Physick and Divinity. Briefly examining the former of these in their order, I shall more particularly direct your attention to the last four, as being the most probable objects of your future pursuit.

The advantages attached to rural life are great and obvious. The purity of the air gives health and hilarity; the efforts of industry, comfort and independence; and the variegated beauty of the surrounding scenery inspires cheerfulness and tranquillity.

But, in this as well as every other part of human life, accident frequently interrupts success, and unlooked for misfortune paralyzes exertion. The reward of long and painful labour is frequently annihilated by the capriciousness of climate, the continuance of drought, the excess of moisture, the severity of winter, or the rage of a too ardent sun; evils, which the most consummate prudence cannot prevent, the most vigilant industry cannot control.

The life of an agriculturist is a life of uninterrupted anxiety and care; secluded from the bustle and amusing activity of a city, he must experience the stillness of retirement, if not of solitude; which, unless the mind be richly stored by previous cultivation, must ever give the rolling hours a dull and heavy iteration.

Among other serious inconveniences which attend upon rural life, two of the most prominent are, the want of immediate medical assistance in cases of sudden and pressing emergency, and the general want of convenient and competent schools for the education of children. He, however, who can cheerfully submit to these privations, will avoid much perplexity and trouble which are inseparably connected with a city life; he may solace himself with the enjoyment of tranquillity and ease; he may be soothed by the conviction that the agriculturist is one of the most useful and important contributors to the general interests of human society; and that if he want the amusements and luxuries of a town, he is removed at the same time from its mortifications and its extravagancies, the restraints of etiquette, the follies of fashion, the diseases of luxury, and the vices of dissipation.

"Few politicians," says the sagacious Dr. Swift, "with all their schemes, are half so useful members of a commonwealth, as an honest farmer; who by skilfully draining, fencing, manuring, and planting, hath increased the intrinsick value of a piece of land, and thereby done a perpetual service to his country; which it is a great controversy whether any of the former ever did since the creation of the world; but no controversy at all, that ninety-nine in a hundred have done abundance of mischief."*

They who are engaged in the exercise of the various mechanick arts, form a very important class, indeed, in the community; not only promoting by their efforts the comforts and accommodations of its individual members, but constituting that link in the great chain of civil society, which connects and supports its several gradations, and, in fact, without which its existence would soon be destroyed, and we should experience the many wants

* Drapier's Letters, No. 7.

which the social state necessarily gives birth to, without being able to gratify them by our own most active exertions.

Although expansion of mind, and the studious cultivation of the intellectual powers are not necessary to the successful exercise of the mechanick arts, which depend chiefly on the force and application of the corporal powers, yet should every mechanick previously acquire the elementary parts, at least, of a plain, unornamented education. Every carpenter, blacksmith, and baker should know how to read and write, and be able to apply the common rules of arithmetick.

To each description of artificers belong, as to the liberal professions, peculiar advantages and disadvantages. If the carpenter, for example, be exposed to more personal danger, from his frequently elevated situation on the roofs and eves of lofty buildings; if the very implements of his trade require the utmost caution in their use, and even in the most skilful hands frequently inflict dangerous, nay, sometimes, mortal wounds; yet he avoids the inconveniences and hazard of health, which the sedentary occupation of the weaver, the cordwainer, and the tailor gives birth to, the noxious atmosphere which surrounds the painter, and the offensive effluvia which assail the soap-boiler, the glue-maker, and the tanner; and all these avoid the dangers and laborious exertions which the carpenter must undergo. Through the whole circle of the mechanick arts, a comparison of each with another affords to its practitioner sufficient reason for his attachment to that which he has chosen.

Though the army and the navy are establishments necessary for the protection and security of our national interests, though they elevate their commissioned officers to the rank and privileges of gentlemen, though they naturally induce a polish and urbanity of manners, yet are they in the highest possible degree dangerous to the morals of those who enter into either, and particularly so to young men. The leisure and favourable opportunities which they afford for the cultivation of the mind, and the exercise of the benevolent affections of the heart, being often devoted to the delusions of vice, and sacrificed in the purlieus of debauchery.

"It happens unfortunately," says a judicious modern writer,* "that profligacy, libertinism, and infidelity, are thought by weaker minds almost as necessary a part of a soldier's uniform as his shoulder-knot. To hesitate at an oath, to decline intoxication, to profess a regard for religion, would be almost as ignominious as to refuse a challenge. Insolvency and disease, some of the greatest misfortunes which can befal a human creature, are often thought to add a grace to the military man. He dresses, he drinks, he blusters, he spends his money, he ruins his constitution and his peace; but his compensation for all this is, that he is a favourite of the ladies; and really in this, his ultimate object, he often succeeds; for too many of them, who are as weak as himself, are ready to run wild at the sight of an epaulet."

These, let it be remembered, are the sentiments and declarations of a foreigner, with respect to the habits and manners of some of the military of his own country. The intrepid virtue of the

* Vicesimus Knox, Essay 19.

American character, will, I trust, ever preserve the youth of this country from so shameful a degree of degradation; though the temptations incident to these professions exist as powerfully here as in other places; with this exception, that, I believe, they yet want here the stimulating influence of example.

The admirable moralist I have just quoted, concludes his remarks with this excellent advice to him who enters into either of the professions under consideration.

"He should recollect that he has a soul like men who do not wear an epaulet, and should think of that immortality which the wisest of mankind have expected. Let him not be ashamed of reading the Scriptures, or those excellent comments upon them, the sermons of our great English divines. It is false valour which sets God and Eternity at defiance; and it is real cowardice to be afraid of the ridicule which the performance of religious or any other duty may incur. He is often heard to say, in the language of his profession, that he is *upon duty*, and it is to be wished that he considered the meaning of the word in its full extent."*

Since such professions, however, are necessary, it is, indeed, most devoutly to be wished that they should be exercised with that strict regard to morality, and that intrepid observance of religious duties, which give true lustre to the human character in every walk of life.

In fine, though the love of our country is a virtuous and manly principle, and though it is honourable and glorious to defend, nay even to die in defence of her rights, yet it is much to be lamented, that between countries professing christianity, such principles and practices should obtain, as give rise to those professions, the exercise of which is a disgrace to us as christians, and a just reproach to us as rational beings.

Law, Physick, and Divinity, have always been distinguished by the appellation of the liberal, or learned professions, because a long course of study, and the previous acquisition of a considerable degree of general science are necessary to qualify the student for an honourable and justly confident entrance upon the exercise of his profession.

In this country, however, the attention of a very great majority of our youth is directed to the interests of Commerce. And, that the merchant has not been ranked on the scale of science with the lawyer, the physician, and the divine, can only be imputed to the prevalence of an erroneous opinion, that little previous education is necessary, in that profession, and that an acquaintance with common arithmetick, book-keeping, and the art of writing, are all that is requisite. This, I readily grant, is true, with respect to a mere trader or chapman; but in the elevated and honourable place, which a real merchant ought to hold in the scale of civil society, the advantages of a liberal or classical education, may be as conspicuous and as useful as in those already mentioned. Wealth always attracts attention, and commands influence; and in no profession is it more suddenly or more copiously acquired than in the mercantile. This being effected, and indeed, in the progress of its acquisition,

* Essays, No. 19.

a merchant without a cultivated mind, in proportion as he feels his superiority on the score of affluence, must feel his deficiency on that of science and general knowledge, in that circle of associates, into which his affluence will necessarily introduce him; and he will be subjected to the mortifying imposition of silence, or the more painful and degrading one of exposing his ignorance on all subjects which have any relation to literature. Hence, in a company of unlettered merchants, a man of education would be as solitary as in a wilderness, all topicks of discourse which involve scientifick information being necessarily excluded: and to such a man, language (and that too generally ungrammatical) which conveys no ideas but such as relate to the price of stocks, of ships, of sugar, or of coffee, must be fatiguing and disgusting. There may, indeed, as Dr. Johnson justly discriminates, be a great deal of *talk*, but there can be no coversation, nothing discussed. Whereas, with the previous foundation of a liberal education, or, at least, such a knowledge of the languages, and general elements of science as will enable a man, during his hours of leisure to cultivate an *intellectual*, as in those of business a *pecuniary* capital, a merchant will always command respect and attention; as in addition to his intellectual treasures, and his competency of discussion on all subjects, he will, from his daily intercourse with society, and his general knowledge of men and manners, unavoidably acquire such urbanity of deportment, and facility of communication, as must render him both pleasing and instructive.

The general advantages of this profession are, the possibility of a speedy, and almost unbounded, acquisition of wealth; the means of subsistence which its exercise affords to many of the lower order of the community, and the encouragement which is given by it to farmers, manufacturers, and industrious mechanicks.

Since the art of navigation has enabled men to transport the productions of one country to another, merchants have ever been considered as a very respectable and important portion of the community. In the Holy Scriptures, the celebrated city of Tyre is called "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth."* And of Babylon, it is said, "thy merchants are the great men of the earth."† And among modern nations, those have ever been the most flourishing, whose commerce has been most diffused and comprehensive.

From the peculiar circumstances attached to this country, and its relative situation with respect to others, the mercantile character is rendered singularly conspicuous; and, from the peculiar nature of its government, demands the possession not only of extensive professional talents, with respect to the mechanical operations of business, but also a very considerable degree of classical and general literature. The gradations of society not being yet sufficiently marked, to admit of hereditary, and official influence, every member of the community, possessed of integrity, and in any degree elevated by his property above the order of plebeians, is liable to be called upon to act as a representative of the people, in the great de-

* Isaiah, xxiii, 8. † Rev. xv. i, 23.

liberative council of the nation. Here, to render himself useful, a considerable share of historical, legal, political, and rhetorical knowledge, is indispensably necessary; and, unless previously acquired, cannot then be instantaneously obtained. In such popular assemblies, eloquence, in particular, which has been justly styled "the ornament of wisdom, and the imperial diadem of science," is a talent of inestimable value; as without it the most solid acquirements must remain in a state of torpid inactivity, but in conjunction with it, must render their possessor irresistibly attractive and commanding.

(To be continued.)

CRITICISM.

Odes from the Norse, &c.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

—With bolder note, and wilder flight,
O'er the loud strings his rapid hand would run:
Mars hath lit his torch of war,
Ranks of heroes fill the sight!
Hark, the carnage is begun!
Earl of Carlisle.

We proceed, upon the plan described in our preceding number, to set before our readers Mr. Gray's Odes from the Norse and Welch Tongues, of which the first, in order, is that entitled, The Fatal Sisters, the argument of which we shall give in Mr. Gray's own words.

'In the Eleventh Century, Sigurd, Earl of the Orkney Islands, went, with a fleet of ships, and a considerable body of troops, into Ireland, to the assistance of Syctryg with the Silken Beard, who was then making war on his father-in-law, Brian, King of Dublin. The Earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and Syctryg was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of Brian, their King, who fell in the action. On Christmas-day (the day of the battle)* a native of Caithness, in Scotland, saw at a distance, a number of persons riding full speed toward a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till, looking through an opening in the rocks, he saw twelve gigantick figures, resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and, as they wove, they sung the following dreadful Song; which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped, six to the north, and as many to the south. These were the *Valkyriur*, female divinities, servants of Odin (or Woden) in the Gothick Mythology. Their name signifies choosers of the slain. They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to *Valkalla*, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the brave, where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

Now the storm begins to low'r
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare!)
Iron sleet of arrowy show'r
Hurtles in the darkened air.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's wo, and Randver's bane.

See the grisly texture grow
('Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping warriour's head.

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* 'In the argument of this Ode,' says Mr. Mason, 'it is said, that the battle was fought on Christmas-day; on which Mr. Gray, in his manuscript, remarks, that "the people of the Orkney Islands were Christians, yet they did not become so till after A. D. 966, probably it happened in 995; but, though they, and the other Gothick nations, no longer worshipped their old divinities, yet they never doubted of their existence, or forgot their ancient mythology, as appears from the history of Olaus Tryggueson. See Bartholinus, lib. viii, c. i, p. 615." *Mason.*

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along:
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
Keep the tissue firm and strong!

Mista, black, terriffick maid!
Sangrida, and Hilda, see
Join the wayward work to aid!
'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, jav'lins sing;
Blade with clatt'ring buckler meet,
Hauberk clash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war,)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through th' ensanguin'd field,
Gondula, and Gaira, spread
O'er the youthful king your shield!

We the reins to slaughter give
(Ours to kill and ours to spare:)
Spite of danger, he shall live,
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They whom once, the desert beach
Pent within its black domain
Soon shall ample sway extend
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,
Gor'd with many a gaping wound.
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Erin weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality!

Horrour covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun,
Sisters, weave the web of death,
Sisters, cease, the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands,
Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenour of our song!
Scotland thro' each winding vale,
Far and wide the notes prolong!

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed!
Each her thund'ring faulchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed;
Hurry, hurry to the field!

'The original,' says Mr. Gray, 'is to be found in the Orcades of Thormodus Torfæus; Haffniæ, 1697, folio; and also in Bartholinus:

Vitt er orpit furir valfalli, &c.

Ex *Arcadibus* Thormodi Torfæi Hafniæ, 1697.

Late diffunditur
Anti stragem futuram
Sagittarum nubes:
Depluit sanguis:
Jam hastis applicatur
Cineracea
Tela virorum,
Quam amicæ texunt
Rubro sub tegmine
Randveri mortis.

Texitur hæc Tela
Intestinis humanis,
Staminique stricte alligantur
Capita humana,
Sunt sanguine roratæ
Hastæ pro silibus,
Textore instrumentæ ferrea,
Ac sagittæ pro radiis:
Denasfinus gladiis
Hanc victoriæ Telam.

Prodeunt ad texendum Hilda,
Et Hiorthrimula;
Sangrida et Suipula;
Cum strictis gladiis;
Hastile frangetur
Scutum diffindetur,
Ensisque
Clypes illidetur.

Texamus, texamus,
Telam Darradi!
Hunc (gladium) rex juvenis
Prius possidebat.
Prodeamus,
Et cohortes intremus,
Ubi nostri amici
Armis dimicant!

Texamus, texamus
Telam* Darradi;
Et rege deinde
Deinde adhæramus!
Ibi videbant
Sanguine rorata scuta
Gunna et Gondula,
Quæ regem tutabantur.

Texamus, texamus
Telam Darridi,
Ubi arma concrepant
Bellacium virorum,
Non sinamus eum
Vita privari;
Habent Valkyriæ
Cædis potestatem.

* So Thormodus interprets it, as though *Darradar* were the name of the person who saw this vision; but, in reality, it signifies *a Range of Spears*, from *Daur*, hasta, and *Radir*, ordo.

Illi populi terras regent,
Qui deserta promontoria
Antea incolebant.
Dico potenti regi
Mortem imminere.
Jam sagittis occubit Comes;

Et Hibernis
Dolor accidit
Qui nunquam
Apud viros delebitur.
Jam Tela texta est.
Campus vero (sanguine) roratus;
Terras percurret
Conflictus militum.

Nunc horrendum est
Circumspicere,
Cum sanguinea nubes
Per aera volitet:
Tingetur aer
Sanguine virorum,
Antequam vaticina nostra
Omnia corruant.
Bene canimus
De rege juvenæ
Victoriæ carmina multa:
Bene sit nobis canentibus.
Discat autem ille,
Qui auscultat,
Bellica carmina multa,
Et viris referat.

Equitemus in equis
Quoniam efferimus gladios strictos
Ex hoc loco.

Importance of Newspapers.

Would parents and tutors be careful to put a well-conducted and chaste newspaper in the way of ingenious youth, they would find it lead to great and rapid improvements in the science of life and manners, with the least possible trouble to themselves. Novelty has sufficient attractions for the young; and such a literary dessert might give a higher relish to its enjoyment.

The subsequent essay is intended to encourage this mode of promoting juvenile proficiency; and to stimulate the managers of such publications to render them meet for the eyes of unsuspecting innocence.

Among the various causes that have contributed to the general diffusion of knowledge in the present age, nothing seems to have been of more importance than the circulation of so many different newspapers. A superficial observer will, perhaps, smile at this opinion: when he considers what slender abilities are generally employed in the compilation of some, what prejudice is displayed in the conduct of others, and what factious principles are disseminated through this medium; he will probably, be surprised that a newspaper, however well it may be conducted, should come in for such distinguished applause.

But where is the good that may not be perverted to evil? the blessing that may not be abused? Excess of liberty degenerates into licentiousness; and too great indulgence in the pleasures of the table may prove as fatal as the most deleterious poisons.

It is well known that, within these few years, diurnal publications have been multiplied to an amazing degree, and their characters, for taste in arrangement and elegance of composition, in some measure, keep pace with their numbers. Competition begets exertion; and those who hope that their writings shall be read, and their labours patronized, study to adorn them with all the charms of polished diction, and the attractive grace of novelty.

The information that newspapers formerly conveyed was trivial; and the circulation was proportionally confined.

The learned, the rich, and the idle, alone thought of encouraging them, about half a century ago; now all ranks and descriptions of men, read, study, and endeavour to comprehend the intelligence they convey, and too often adopt the principles they recommend, without examination; and act on them, as if they were stanctioned by irrefragable authority This, no doubt, is unfortunate; but it is in some measure remedied by the contrary opinions of contending Journalists; and truth and justice may generally be found by comparing different statements, and keeping a middle course between both extremes.

It is dangerous for those only, who read but one paper, and that paper is

made the vehicle of false principles and delusive reasoning; or, where original prejudice gives a wrong bias to the mind; and thus converts even salutary caution to criminal intemperance.

On the other hand a paper conducted on proper, religious and political principles, is calculated to do infinite service among those, more especially, who are incapable of thinking for themselves, and who, by habits, acquire the sentiments that perpetually meet their eyes, and amuse their vacant hours. And, in the country particularly how many thousands receive what they read in a periodical publication as oracular decisions; and, to whom a knowledge of social or moral duty could not otherwise be communicated, as they too often neglect the established means of instruction, or despise its assistance. Hence the importance of journals that preserves these grand objects in view—to illuminate, and to reform. And from the same consideration, may be seen the infamy and guilt of those who poison the publick mind, weaken the faith of revelation, unhinge the ties of moral order, and disseminate opinions subversive of the well being of civilized society. Could the authours of such publications, whether issuing regularly or occasionally from the press, sit down and consider, with calm attention, what possible ill effects may result from their want of integrity or duty as men and citizens, they would shudder at the reflection.

The solitary views of men may affect a few; but who can estimate the mischief of publick ill example, or atone for the wide-spread effects of pernicious principles.

But, on the tendency of newspapers, perhaps, enough has been said. Their general direction, it is to be hoped, is good; and that much more service is done by the aggregate mass, than evil is occasioned by particular parts.

All, even the worst, in other points of view, tend to convey instruction, and to generalize knowledge. By giving intelligence from every quarter of the globe, they excite inquiries; by displaying the good and bad qualities of other nations, they remove illfounded prejudices, or confirm deserved aversion. They communicate beneficial discoveries, which would otherwise be lost; they record transactions which engage admiration, or rivet disgust; they warn by example, and instruct by censure. They diffuse taste; they correct prevailing absurdities. They awe the proudest into the conviction of keeping some terms with publick opinion.

They deter the flagitious from crimes, lest they should be held up to the publick detestation: and, in fine, they watch over individual and publick liberty, which can never be violated with impunity, while the press remains pure and free.

Thus, to the philosophick eye, the diurnal labours of characters, undignified by literature, appear capable of producing more extensively beneficial consequences than the abilities of a Plato, a Socrates, or a Johnson.

May such feel the value of the rank they hold; and never more disgrace it, by propagating vice or willful errour, by lending their sanction to the worthless, or by weakening the bands that preserve mankind in harmony and happiness.

VARIETY.

In the rough blast heaves the billow,
In the light air waves the willow;
Every thing of moving kind
VARIES with the veering wind:
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

Sombre tale, and satire witty,
Sprightly glee, and doleful ditty,
Measur'd sighs, and roundelay,
Welcome all! but do not stay.
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

—

When bounding o'er the lofty yard,
The jolly seaman reefs the sail,
Though whirlwinds roar, he grapples hard
The swimming beam, nor dreads the gale:
When hidden rocks and sable clouds,
Impede the shatter'd vessel's way,
The boatswain, clinging to the shrouds,
Undaunted pipes his midnight lay.

And, ere the wreck begins to sink,
Ere thro' her sides the billows pour,
The sailor bravely stops to drink,
Then grasps the mast and gains the shore:
Thus, HARRIOT, were I moor'd with you,
No threatening danger would I see,
But laugh at terrour's pale-fac'd crew,
And baffle life's tempestuous sea:

Or haply should soft zephyrs blow,
We'd leave the port and share the gale;
While Bacchus call'd all hands below,
And fortune laughing set our sail:
From quicksands of domestick care,
Where Jealousy's loud breakers roar;
From Sorrow's coast we'd steer afar,
'Till Death should tow our boat ashore.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For The Port Folio.

From Hafiz, Ode 3.

Boy, quick! bring the goblets and fill them with wine,
With sparkling wine, till no more they will hold;
For love finds relief in the tears of the vine,
'Tis wine heals the hearts of the young and the old.

The wine and the cup are the sun and the moon;
To the arms of the moon, O! then let him retire,
Pour wine red and bright as the splendour of noon;
Pour freely the liquor that sparkles like fire.

If the rose droops his head in the fervour of day,
If its cheek is all wither'd, and faded its hue;
Dip it deep in the bowl; and enliven'd and gay,
Its blushes and odour it soon shall renew.

If the nightingale ceases his tale to relate;
To the musick of glasses your bosoms expand.
Mourn not for a moment the changes of fate,
But hear the lute ring in a masterly hand.

I shall kiss my beloved's white breast in my sleep;
Then again let my cup with the lov'd liquor redden:
To hasten the moment pour freely and deep,
And Hafiz will drink if allow'd or forbidden.

CARLOS.

For The Port Folio.

SONNET TO LOVE.

"There is a calm for those that weep."
Montgomery.

Why bold intruder seek again,
To swell with grief this troubled soul?
Why fill again the fatal bowl,
Which cold neglect once bade me drain?
Since I can ne'er their joys attain,
But floods of misery o'er me roll,
Nor Laura deigns my cares console,
Oh, spare this fever of the brain.
A prey to complicated wo,
Despair's thick clouds around me low'r,
And wrap my soul in midnight gloom.
Is there "*a calm*?"—Ah! surely no,
Heaven frowned upon my natal hour,
And mark'd me for an early tomb.

ZERBINO.

FROM CATULLUS.

Another version of "*vivemus, mea Lesbia.*"

Let our thoughtless moments pass
Between the bower and the glass,
And crazier love and crazier joy
All our hearts and souls employ:
Winds delight us with their blowing,
Their charter fails where wine is flowing.
Beams of morning, soon ye wane!
Morn may never break again.
Old ones, why then groan and mutter
At all we feel, and half we utter?
Why censure all the dreams and flights,
That warm our days and wing our nights?
Folly's Cap and Folly's bells,
Are yours, my sobbing sons of cells.
Well, take them, Pioneers of Care,
With looks so sage and bones so bare;
But Folly's Feather, leave me this
To tip the flagging wing of Bliss.

H. L.

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